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Local MP reflects
Jamie Schmale looks back on pandemic-ridden 2020.
See page 2

New novel
Local author releases latest book, *Kinmount*.
See page 4.

2020 Minden Bird Count
Results show bird numbers are down this year.
ee page 7.

This barred owl has been keeping an eye on things this past week. /KAREN LONDON Staff

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MP Schmale reflects on year, hopes for 'positive' 2021

MIKE BAKER
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

While he doesn't want to see another federal election any time soon, sitting Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MP Jamie Schmale has once again ensured he will be the Conservative candidate on the ballot the next time one rolls around.

Schmale was formally acclaimed as the Conservative nominee on Dec. 12, 2020. Following the announcement, he caught up with *County Life* to discuss the possibility of an early election being called, reflect on a year decimated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and consider some of the issues that are likely to take centre stage in 2021.

Although most things pre-COVID-19 seem like a lifetime ago now, the 2019 federal election wrapped up only 14 months ago. The next one is slated to take place on, or before, Oct. 16, 2023. With Prime Minister Justin Trudeau having to settle for a minority government, Schmale believes an election "could come at any time."

"I don't think Canadians really want an election right now. Certainly, nobody I've spoken to is in a rush to get back to the polls, so I don't think we're in a hurry for it. But with that said, we are in the position of having a minority parliament, and an election could come at any time" Schmale said. "We want to make sure we're ready for all possibilities."

The focus for right now though, Schmale says, should be securing and bolstering the Canadian economy, and ensuring the COVID-19 vaccines the federal government has secured get out to the people that need it. With that in mind, Schmale believes "the required amount of parties can find enough common ground" to spare voters from another early election.

With a new leader at the helm in Erin O'Toole, who serves as MP in neighbouring Durham, Schmale believes the local riding is in an advantageous position of having a potential prime minister privy to all the issues and intricacies that exist in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

"Erin knows our riding, and I think that can only be a benefit for us. He borders our riding and knows all about the rural aspect and urban aspect of communities like ours. He is a capable leader who ticks a lot of boxes and brings a lot of common sense to the table," Schmale said. "He's come up with the slogan that he wants us to be 'aggressively reasonable' as a Conservative caucus. He wants to make sure we're doing our jobs properly and appropriately, and that we're not simply opposing things for the sake of it. If we're going to oppose something, he wants us to say why we oppose it, and then put forward a plan as to what we would do differently, which I think is responsible for any opposition member."

A prime example for that, Schmale notes, would be the rollout of the federal government's many COVID-19 relief programs in the early stages of the pandemic. While he was impressed by some aspects, notably the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), Schmale was dismayed by the way the emergency rent and wage subsidies were handled.

When the first iteration of the rent program was released, only around 10 per cent of Canadian businesses qualified, Schmale says. Similarly, when the wage subsidy was announced, it was to cover only 10 per cent of an employee's wage. Many Canadians, including Schmale, lobbied the federal government to make widespread changes to ensure the subsidies were more accessible and wide-reaching.

"The problem was, while this was all going on, parliament wasn't in session. It was difficult advocating for my constituents because there was no avenue [to do so]," Schmale said. "Essentially, the government was making all these announcements, and there was no way to debate or discuss them, so we were forced to use back channels to do all of that, which wasn't as effective as it could have been."

Schmale is also concerned that the Liberals have yet to table a 2020 Budget.

"We've been getting these fiscal updates, which generally put us a few hundred billion in the hole, but we still do not have a budget. This is the longest period in Canadian history that we haven't had a budget – even during the wars, the great wars, we were able to table a budget," Schmale said. "We're over a trillion dollars in debt nationally, with that number growing every day."

Looking locally, Schmale was pleased to see some movement on potential high-speed internet investments across Haliburton County – a particularly pressing matter now that more and more people are working from home.

While he admitted internet service, generally speaking, "isn't very good" in many rural areas right now, he was hopeful that additional funding announced by the Ontario government in November would ensure some problem areas are taken care of sooner rather than later.

"People are frustrated, and I understand that. Having access to a reliable internet service is a necessity in today's age. While I can't give exact timelines, it is refreshing to hear that we're going to see new towers going up and some cable being laid [in our area]," Schmale said. "Hopefully that will provide some relief to what is a major issue across our riding."

While all Ontario residents, and businesses, are currently observing a second provincially-mandated lockdown in the wake of escalating COVID-19 cases, Schmale believes the gradual rollout of the coronavirus vaccine will lead to the eventual full-scale reopening of the economy. Although he acknowledges it may take some time.

"Some experts have said you need upwards of 70 per cent immunity in order to let things go back to the way they were, so it'll take a while to hit that number," Schmale said. "But we need to continue to manage this as best we can and allow for parts of the economy to reopen. Yes, we want people to stay safe, but there also has to be a conversation around how do we live with the virus safely, because the government can't continue to provide bail outs indefinitely. It's just not possible, because somebody, eventually, has to pay all of this back."

He added, "We only have a couple more years of spending, if that, at this level. Then we're back to where we were in the 1990s, where our debt to GDP ratio was upwards of 66 per cent and the government struggled to find anyone willing to purchase our debt. That was when you started to see prices and taxes being increased…"

"We really don't want to get to the point where we start to see our currency start to devalue itself, and the cost of living skyrocket, so the next year or two are going to be pivotal as we try to get back on our feet," Schmale concluded.

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Wilberforce gives students a hand up for future careers

DARREN LUM

County Life Staff

Even with masks on, the two Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Grade 12 students couldn't hide the light in their eyes, expressing their happiness for being chosen as the first recipients of the Wilberforce FUNraising Group Bursary Award.

Students Chelsea Flynn of Wilberforce and Sydney Little of Harcourt were appreciative and grateful for the bursaries, each receiving $500 to go towards their chosen post-secondary path.

The Wilberforce Elementary School graduates said this money will help to cover the cost of equipment related to their areas of study.

Flynn, who has her sights set on becoming a plumber, said she was brought to tears with her mother when she received word she had been chosen as a recipient.

"We were sitting in Haliburton and I cried. My mom and I were sitting in the parking lot, crying," she said.

Her entire family, she said, is employed in the trades.

The bursary will alleviate some of the stress related to buying much of the tools she requires for her upcoming apprenticeship this year, which is made possible through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.

Sydney echoed the importance of the bursary for her career aspirations. She plans to attend post-secondary school for baking later this calendar year to pursue her passion, hoping to use her culinary skills to open her own country cafe.

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School students Sydney Little; front left; and Chelsea Flynn accepted the Wilberforce FUNraising Group Bursary Award worth $500 from the FUNraising Group's Joan Barton; back left; and Kathy Rogers on Dec. 23 at the Herlihey Park bench at the Agnews General Store in Wilberforce. /DARREN LUM Staff

"I just got off work so it was later in the day. I was very happy because I knew that would cover a couple things I knew I needed," she said.

She adds the money will be used to purchase her uniform and enables her to upgrade or add to her collection of baking implements. The senior student said her passion for baking started with her grandmother, who loved to bake pies.

The bursary coordinator and member of the Wilberforce FUNraising Group, Kathy Rogers said the bursary award is all about the community.

"It was an anonymous donation that came to our group because of all the stuff that we do for the community and then we turned the funds around to put back into the community to our youth and folks in the community because we're all about community spirit," Rogers said.

FUNraising group member Joan Barton said this donation was followed up by another surprise donation made by several people, who came forward after reading the *Echo* article promoting the bursary and alerting the public about the deadline in December.

There's a certain message that is being delivered from the community, Barton said.

"I think it says the whole community thinks that the well-being of the young people in the community is tremendously important. That it's a really high priority," she said.

She believes this desire to help young people comes from the large population of seniors and how they want to contribute to a stronger future.

"I think that the community here wants the opportunities our young people have to be just as exciting and just as varied and just as open as the opportunities are for a kid that lives anywhere in Canada. We want our kids to have a level playing field," she said.

There is always a hope that community work is recognized and these donations for the bursary were an affirmation of the efforts.

"When you're trying to be a community group doing work for the good of the community it's always nice to get feedback that, yes, you're going in the right direction. And that's about the most concrete feedback you can get," she said. "We feel like we're doing something that the community wants done."

Rogers said there has been another donation made to the group, which will be used for a bursary for next year. This is in addition to the FUNraising Group's ongoing fundraising efforts from holding events such as the maple syrup festival, penny raffle and the sale of community calendars. The group also welcomes donations from the public.

This bursary was open to students from Wilberforce and the surrounding area.

Preference was given to students entering their first year of post-secondary education.

Barton said this positive outcome is proof of two things: community support and good candidates.

"Our hope at this point is that this is the beginning of something that's going to go on and perhaps get bigger. We've done this and it worked out really well and the intention is to run with it," she said.

See full version of the story online (haliburtonecho.ca/wilberforce-gives-students-a-hand-up-for-future-careers/).

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Novel *Kinmount* puts spotlight on stage

CHAD INGRAM
County Life Staff

Rod Carley's new novel *Kinmount* follows the course of a Shakespeare production gone awry. /Photo submitted

Rod Carley's new novel *Kinmount* is a humorous take on small-town theatre that draws from Carley's own experiences.

"The genesis for it happened when I was a young director," says Carley, who teaches at Canadore College and Nipissing University in North Bay and has previously worked with the Highlands Summer Festival.

"I want to put a qualifier in here – all my experiences with the Highlands Summer Festival were wonderful," he says.

As Carley explains, going back about 25 years he was working as a freelance director, hired to put on productions in various communities. "I did this all over the province and into the United States," he says, adding that part of a director's role is preserving the integrity of a piece of work. "As a director, you're responsible for delivering the words of the playwright."

Carley encountered some situations where producers wanted him to substantially change the plays he was directing for them, in ways they shouldn't have been changed.

"In two cases, I had to walk away from projects," he says. "At the time, they were very harrowing, awful experiences."

In retrospect, Carley saw the humour in these situations, and they form the basis for the book.

"I believe you can tackle serious topics using humour," he says. "They are funny now that I have some distance on it."

Kinmount is about a production of *Romeo and Juliet* gone awry and is set in, well, Kinmount.

"The name was naturally funny," Carley says, noting the word Kinmount contains a noun followed by a verb. "With apologies to the good people of Kinmount," he adds, noting a similar apology appears in the book itself. Aside from the name and some reference to a history of logging, Carley says the Kinmount in his story is otherwise fictionalized. The book is Carley's second novel and was published during a unique time.

"*Kinmount* was launched during the pandemic," he says. "We're all coping with the pandemic in different ways."

Carley says he hopes his humorous novel "is a good tonic that we'll get through it. Everyone needs a laugh right now."

The book clearly had author Terry Fallis cracking up.

"Rod Carley's *Kinmoun*t is a hit that kept me laughing and turning the pages from curtain to curtain," Fallis wrote in a review. "It is funny, thoughtful, compelling, and filled with humane insights about people and their passions."

"If you are in theatre, either as spectator or (foolishly) more deeply involved; if you have ever lived in or driven through an Ontario small town; if you have made love to someone north of Highway 7 and come to understand the intrusive curiosity of shadflies, *Kinmount* is going to make you howl with laughter," Dave Carley – who notes he and Carley are not related – wrote in his review of the novel.

Kinmount is published by Latitude 46 Publishing and its available for order on the company's website as well as Indigo and Amazon, but Carley notes he likes to support independent bookstores and encouraged those interested in his book to try ordering it through Master's Book Store.

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U-Links looking for donors to continue lake monitoring program

MIKE BAKER
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Minden's U-Links Centre for Community Based Research is continuing to put the $74,600 grant it received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation [OTF] in 2019 to good work.

Partnering with the Trent Centre for Community Based Education [TCCBE], U-Links has been using the money to support work on a new community benthos biomonitoring pilot project in Haliburton County.

Benthic invertebrates are aquatic bugs that live on the bottom of a stream, river or lake. The organisms are, typically, strongly affected by their environment, including sediment composition and quality, water quality and hydrological factors that influence the physical habitat. Because the benthic community is so dependent on its surroundings, it serves as a biological indicator that reflects the overall condition of a water body's aquatic environment.

The focus of this particular collaborative program, says Jim Blake, co-chair of the U-Links' management committee, has been to create a sustainable biomonitoring system in the Haliburton-Kawarthas bio-region, one that encourages residents to support a healthy and sustainable environment.

"By supporting important pilot research, we are taking steps to better preserve our lakes and the wildlife that live in and around them," said Laurie Scott, MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. "Our government is proud to support this research pilot to improve the monitoring and preservation of our lakes."

OTF is an agency of the Ontario government. The foundation awarded $115 million to 644 projects last year to help "build healthy and vibrant communities" across the province.

Locally, the grant money was used to hire an aquatic and terrestrial biomonitoring coordinator, purchase biomonitoring equipment, match the projects with students from Trent University and Fleming College, and commence baseline sampling sessions in collaboration with six local lake associations. Five additional lakes were added to the program in 2020, bringing the overall total to 11.

> *By supporting important pilot research, we are taking steps to better preserve our lakes and the wildlife that live in and around them.*
>
> — MPP Laurie Scott

Blake says the collaborative are working hard to secure ongoing funding to continue to monitor the lakes currently enrolled in the program, expand the number of lakes involved and, eventually, to replicate a similar system already in place in Kawartha Lakes and Peterborough County.

Blake says the longer the program runs, the more data U-Links can collect to identify long-term trends for the health of each lake.

"The analysis of the type and number of species of bugs present at lake sampling sites, combined with standard water quality testing data, provides an early warning system for changes in lake health," a recent U-Links media release states. "Results of the mid-term evaluation show that TCCBE and U-Links made progress on all established milestones, that there is confidence amongst stakeholders in the effectiveness of the model, and interest from partners to scale up the project in new areas."

The organizations are actively searching for donors to help them continue the program beyond April of this year.

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This isn't the time to be playing games

AS A MASSIVE sports fan, there's a big part of me that kinda, sorta hates the fact that I wrote this editorial.

Alas, it had to be done.

I expect I'll cop a fair amount of flak for this from my sports-mad brethren, but why on earth are top-level athletes around the globe being given even more of a reason to believe they're some kind of godly humanoid hybrid, who don't have to adhere to all the rules and regulations us mere mortals live by on a day-to-day basis?

MIKE BAKER
Editor

Remember when the Ontario government initiated that super inconvenient lockdown back on Boxing Day with the understanding it would help to flatten the curve of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic? Yeah, me too. However, it seems the National Hockey League didn't get the memo.

Literally. They didn't get it.

Last we heard, Ontario Premier Doug Ford said, on Dec. 21, that no decision had been made over whether the province would allow NHL games to be played in Toronto and Ottawa this season.

In an effort to pacify the Canadian government, who had already refused to give special treatment to the Toronto Raptors and allow them to travel back and forth between Canada and the USA for NBA games, foregoing COVID-19 quarantine regulations, the NHL made significant changes to its divisional structure, creating a Canada-only conference, made up of the country's seven professional big league teams.

The new hockey season began in earnest yesterday [Jan. 13], with the Maple Leafs taking on the Montreal Canadiens in Toronto. Tomorrow [Jan. 15], the Battle of Ontario takes over the nation's capital when the Ottawa Senators welcome the Leafs to town.

While I am excited to once again have the opportunity to sit in front of my TV screen and watch some live hockey, even more so now that I can cheer on the studs I recently selected to serve on my 2021 fantasy hockey team, there's another part of me that thinks it's absolutely ridiculous that, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the worst it's ever been on these shores, we're allowing certain people to break all of the health and safety regulations the general public have been told they categorically must follow.

Actually, let me correct myself there. We aren't allowing these certain people to do that. The Ontario government is.

I understand the NHL playoff bubbles that took place in Toronto and Edmonton last summer were very successful. But they came at a time when the COVID-19 numbers were trending downwards in Canada. We just had yet another record-breaking day for new cases on Sunday here in Ontario. Things aren't okay right now.

Things are even worse over in the UK. Despite having almost 1.6 million active cases of coronavirus, and initiating a strict national lockdown that includes a stay-at-home order for all residents and the closure of all schools, it was deemed appropriate for the nation's four professional soccer leagues to carry on playing games behind closed doors, with no fans in attendance.

That hasn't stopped almost 100 players and coaching staff from the 20 top teams in the country, and hundreds more in the divisions below, from catching COVID-19. Still, the games continue.

It's the same in Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Poland… Basically, all of Europe. The cherry on top there is that certain teams have been granted permission to travel overseas and compete in an ongoing international competition. Because COVID-19 has unquestionably shown that it does not affect soccer players, and it does not cross international lines…

On second thoughts, maybe it's the same for hockey players! Yeah, that must be it. Nice. Crisis averted.

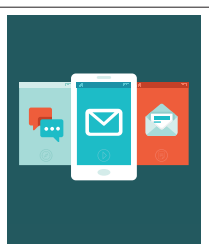
Let the games begin, I guess.

Top 10 reasons woodpeckers peck trees

LATELY, I'VE been watching woodpeckers a lot more than most people would consider normal. This has caused me to ponder why it is they spend all that time hammering away at trees. Here are the top 10 reasons I came up with.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. They watch the news every night.
2. An unhealthy affinity for Morse code.
3. To show all the other birds they are "loco."
4. Can't find tap shoes that fit.
5. Pathological hatred of trees.
6. A treasure map steered them wrong.
7. Building condos for red squirrels.
8. They've already tried it on rocks.
9. Sapsuckers for punishment.
10. Always wanted to be a metronome.



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
mike@haliburtonpress.com

Summer Snowballs

She misses prairie winter
Saskatchewan of old
When childhood felt relentless
In January cold

Sheer whiteness met horizon
Breath hung like scarves in sky
She crunched through
crispy drifting
Blue shadows fooled her eye

Her siblings built high sled hills
Or slid down what was there
Some blizzards blew in sideways
Numb children didn't care

When thirsty, they ate icicles
When hungry, they forgot
West light was turning silver
Stay out! Was all they thought

When finally the sun shrank
And fainted into field
Young toes and fingers frozen up
And bellies feeling yield

To hunger beyond breakfast
(Potato cakes stacked tall)
Pierogis were for supper:
No need for mother's call

She knew that when first
star showed
All family would rush home
Her cooking on the table
Put twinkles on the gloam

Her household loved its mama
So funny and so sweet
A genius with pastry
A wizard with spiced meat

A sewing-needle Einstein
An actor with a book
From western soil she grew
their meals
Her dance moves made
them look

So proud they were of mother
So proud of farmer dad
Their memories of growing:
Amazing, never sad

Those kids would fail to notice
Each winter while they played
That mama filled a bucket
With summer garden spade

Instead of earth in April
She scooped firm slush near door
And quickly with warm
kitchen hands
Formed snowball sets to store

And somehow hidden deep
in fridge
Top freezer part, back wall
Behind spare borscht and
chicken cuts
Ma hid each fresh snowball

And over hours they'd harden
Untouched as months flew by

By summer kids were wild
with heat
Crescendo in July

Mosquitoes, sunburn, black flies
Scab knees and drippy brows
The young'uns longed for winter
And colder fun for wows

So suddenly from nowhere
Small bucket would appear
Full-loaded with real snowballs
Which triggered sweaty cheer

The gophers and cicadas
Stopped scuttling in the heat
And wondered if that flying ice
Was something good to eat

Those prairie days are gone now
Soft pictures in old head
Of family and of great outdoors
Of clinging to homestead

She now sits by small window
Plain sandwich on her plate
And waits if stars might twinkle
And traffic might abate

Her thoughts play fresh
as movies
Her eyes blaze bold as sun
Her childhood days stay
safely wrapped
One smile thanks everyone

Deborah J. Reed

Lingering female Wood Duck on Horseshoe Lake. /Submitted by Ed Poropat

2020 Minden Christmas Bird Count reveals fewer birds

ED POROPAT

Special to *County Life*

The 54th Annual Minden Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, Dec. 19 with 27 field observers counting throughout the selected area, and a further 31 feeder-watchers carefully scrutinizing their backyard feeding stations. This year, the weather was mostly cooperative, with cloudy skies in the morning, giving way to a light snow in the afternoon. With temperatures hovering near the freezing mark, it was a near perfect winter day to be outside.

Overall, over 124 hours were spent observing, ultimately yielding a relatively clear picture of bird populations in southern Haliburton County during the early winter of 2020. So what do the numbers show us?

Well, as expected, the diversity of species this winter appears to be slightly above average, with a total of 47 different kinds observed on count day, and another two species recorded during count week. The 20 year average is about 45 species. This was expected, largely due to the influx of northern finches such as redpolls and grosbeaks. A relatively warm fall and early winter combined with this movement of northern finches increased the diversity in the region.

Conversely, the total number of individuals counted were significantly down, with only 3,724 individuals recorded (well below the 20-year average of 4,282). This general scarcity of birds in the region can be attributed partially to the lack of food in the woods, especially cone crops. Many feeder-watchers and birders commented on the fact that they had seen many more birds earlier in the winter. Others noted that more birds appeared on feeders during the week after count day. Again, this was somewhat predictable. Although we had a decent influx of finches during the late fall, especially crossbills and siskins, many of these wandering flocks simply cleared out of the region due to the lack of natural food. Presently, these species are frequenting areas south of the Canadian Shield, where they are not commonly observed (much to the delight of birders down there!). The surge of observations on feeders after the count was also expected, as snowfalls and ice covered many food sources, especially weedy fields. This forced local birds to feeding stations. Whether some of the decrease in numbers is actually attributable to declines in species numbers remains to be seen, and will only be apparent over the long term.

Once again, there were a few highlights during count day, as is always the case. Although no new species were discovered for the count this year (it presently sits at 108 species), there were a few notable sightings. One intrepid team was up early to survey for owls and discovered a calling long-eared owl. This was only the second record for the Minden Count. Other owls were also well represented this year, probably buoyed by the healthy rodent populations. 8 different barred owls were observed, tying the count record. A great horned owl was also heard hooting during the pre-dawn hours. Another nice find was a red-bellied woodpecker that was frequenting feeders in Minden. Although it was only the third count record, it is a species that is increasing both its range and abundance. It will likely become a regularly occurring resident in the Minden landscape. A secretive Northern goshawk, hunting along the Milburn Road, thrilled birders there, as this species is not often observed in the area. A female wood duck, a rare bird in Haliburton County during the winter, was observed with Mallards both before and after the count, but could not be found on the 19. A couple of hardy American robins made use of the abundant fruit trees in and around Minden.

Some bird species appear to be doing very well. Count records were set for both mallard (425) and rock pigeon (292). A quick walk through downtown Minden on any day of the year will testify that the latter species is showing strong breeding success there. Northern cardinals have also had a successful year. There were many observations of this species in late October

see OBSERVERS page 8

Observers spot 47 different species during 2020 Minden Bird Count

from page 7

and November around Haliburton County, and several have decided to spend the winter in the region. A total of 6 birds were found on count day, falling just below the record of seven. Despite relatively low numbers of American tree sparrows and dark-eyed juncos this winter, the high ehite-throated sparrow totals were a pleasant surprise (three). The open water along the Gull River has encouraged four belted kingfishers to overwinter. This also ties a count record.

The movement of winter finches in the province is always intriguing, and is intricately tied to the abundance of food across the north. With poor birch seed crops in the boreal region, common redpolls have irrupted into the southern parts of the province. A total of 92 individuals were observed, although many more were likely in the area. Interestingly, they outnumbered both American goldfinches (75), and pine siskins (0). Both pine and evening grosbeaks were present this year. The former species (141) is being regularly observed this winter, especially around fruit trees. The latter species (75) also made an appearance on count day, although many are still wandering around Southern Ontario in search of cones. A single White-winged Crossbill was recorded by one group.

Our resident bird populations seem to be holding steady. Black-capped chickadee numbers seemed down slightly with 1,172 counted. The 20-year average is around 1,362. Although many red-breasted nuthatches vacated the region during the fall due to a lack of cones, the non-migratory White-breasted Nuthatches were abundant. The 135 observed fell just short of a record (141). Woodpecker numbers were about average. Despite the remarkable exodus of blue jays this fall from the province, 417 were still recorded on count day. Most were visiting feeding stations.

Waterfowl were definitely on the move both on and before the 19. The over-wintering five trumpeter swans on Gull Lake were not a surprise, but the single red-breasted merganser at Moore Falls was a nice find late in the day. Other diving ducks were notably absent, as many departed the area due to the frigid temperatures earlier in the week, icing over many of the lakes. Surprisingly, no vommon loons were found lingering as they often do.

Wild turkey numbers continue to show a strong population in the area. Although many birds seemed to be hiding on count day, we still managed to record 177 individuals within the circle. Although only five ruffed grouse were recorded on the 19, the numbers appear to be on the rise, as many more were reported by observers during the days following the count.

As always, I'd like to thank all the people that participated in this year's Minden Christmas Bird Count, whether field observers or feeder-watchers. Your sightings not only make this count one of the most successful, but also help contribute to bird conservation across the continent. I wish everyone all the best in 2021 and look forward to your contributions again next December.

Snowshoe festival cancelled

CHAD INGRAM

County Life Staff

The County of Haliburton has cancelled Hike Haliburton: Winter Edition, the county-run snowshoe festival that had been scheduled to take place in February.

Back in October, county councillors had enthusiastically and unanimously approved going ahead with the festival, which offers a series of guided snowshoe hikes throughout the county. The event is a spin-off of the popular Hike Haliburton Festival, which takes place each September, but was cancelled in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The winter edition, which had been scheduled to take place Feb. 6 and 7 and would have been the second annual event, was going to have COVID-19 safety protocols in place, including pre-registration and contact tracing. However, with rising daily confirmed case numbers in the province and with Ontario currently under a government-mandated lockdown affecting some businesses, the county issued a cancellation notice in late December.

"We understand that this announcement will be disappointing to many, however with the current provincial lockdown and unknowns regarding future public health guidelines, we feel it is in the best interest for the health and safety of our community to cancel the event," the notice read. "Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the event planning to date. We look forward to better news ahead and an exciting 2022 event."

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Lakefront Property Owners,

Are you aware of the proposed Shoreline Bylaw that the County of Haliburton is currently moving forward with? If not, please feel free to go to the Haliburton County Home Builders Associations website to view the latest draft. Here are a few points that should interest you if you own lakefront property:

- The County Council is recommending that our local municipalities no longer sell the Shore Road Allowance to lakefront property owners.

- The objectives of this bylaw is to achieve 75% natural shoreline including undeveloped lots and it states that the current average for Haliburton County lakes is 47% natural shoreline.

- County Council feels that it is imperative to have this by-law passed by Spring 2021 even though we are in the midst of a global pandemic. A bylaw of this magnitude should include public townhall meetings and this is not possible in these times.

If you have any questions, we at the HCHBA recommend that you write, email, or call your municipal elected officials with your comments or concerns. The Draft Bylaw and Questions and Answers can be found on our website under 'Resources' at www.hchba.ca

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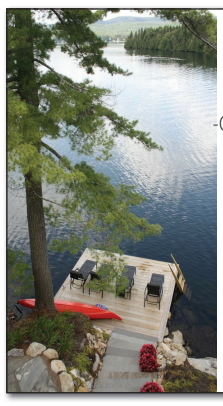

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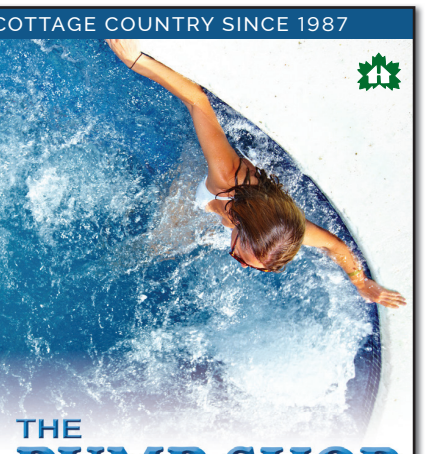

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The Times

Minden

Wednesday, January 19, 1983

The World Famous
ROCKCLIFFE
This Week: TAVERN
Adam Brown
Next Week: **The Strollers**

Municipality applies for official plan

Anson, Hindon and Minden township council has applied to the Ministry of Housing for a municipality-wide official plan. The resolution approving the application was endorsed at a special meeting of the council Thursday evening.

Representatives of the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Natural Resources were in attendance to discuss the planning program for the municipality. At the moment the township is in the middle of a major revision of its zoning by-law. However, both ministries have indicated they will present formal objections to the revised by-law if it fails to recognize the hazard land area adjacent to the Gull River as it flows through Minden.

The challenge to the by-law had brought the revision to a virtual halt. In an effort to correct errors in the first edition of the draft, and to satisfy some of the objections with regard to recreational zones, the municipality had to virtually rewrite the by-law which was circulated last spring

However, there appeared to be little chance that the final zoning by-law would satisfy either provincial ministry, so further objections were expected.

The meeting Thursday evening appears to have smoothed those rough waters.

In agreeing to obtain an official plan for the municipality, the council has also agreed to apply for an engineering study under the Ministry of Natural Resources to determine the extent of the area which could be affected by a flood, what impact additional development in this area would have on the severity of any flooding and other matters related to a flood situation.

The two provincial ministries have also agreed to endorse in principle that the area in Minden which could be affected by the flood would be granted Special Policy Area (SPA) status, which would ease some of the tough restrictions on development in an area which has been designated a hazard zone.

The SPA could not be granted previously because the municipality did not have an official plan.

In addition to embarking on an official plan for the municipality, a special committee of councillors and representatives from the Ministry of Housing will be established to determine what should be done with the half completed revision to the zoning by-law. The by-law will likely have to be changed again once an official plan is established, so that it agrees with the direction of the official plan.

A special committee will also be established to set the guidelines for the official plan study.

The council was told that the Ministry of Housing will provide 75% of the cost of an official plan. The municipality will be responsible for 10% of the engineering study to determine the flood impact area. The question of how much of the cost of the zoning by-law revision will be picked up by the Ministry of Housing is still up in the air. The ministry agreed to pay for a certain amount but if it is decided that the revision should not continue until an official plan is in place, several members of council wondered how much of that cost the ministry would absorb.

(An official plan is a statement of policy which lays out the direction development in the municipality is to take. While it may deal with specifics, its scope is often more broad. A zoning by-law is the mechanism by which an official plan is implemented. It details through maps and regulations, what type of development can take place and where. A zoning by-law contains details on building standards, setbacks and other mechanics involved in the development within a municipality.)

The members of the council were obviously pleased when the request for an official plan was endorsed unanimously.

They exchanged congratulatory hand shakes with the ministry official saying the move was an important and positive one for the township.

Parents will be informed of vaccination options

Parents whose children are required to have vaccinations against mumps, measles and rubella will now receive a letter explaining the options available to them. The move was instituted by the Haliburton County Board of Education following a concern raised by county doctors over the need to immunize students twice against measles and rubella.

The issuing of the letter of explanation will affect Haliburton village parents only, since it was only students in that community who had received the initial request form. Plans to circulate a similar request form for students at Archie Stouffer Elementary School in Minden have been altered to include the letter which Haliburton area parents are now receiving.

The seven doctors in the county had objected, in a letter to the editor which appeared in last week's edition of The Times and Echo, to the giving of a vaccination containing protection against the three diseases when some students only required protection against mumps.

The letter which is now being sent home for parents to

(more on page 2)

Skaters earn proficiency awards

On Tuesday, January 11, members of the Minden Figure Skating Club attended CFSA Test Day in Bancroft.

The following is a list of skaters and their accomplishments:

Sandy Bailey - Swing Dance; Warna Blakey - Second Figure; Lisa Box - Canasta Dance; Abby Burk - Preliminary Free Skate, Dutch Waltz; Misti Campbell - Preliminary Free Skate, Swing Dance; Lisa Carr - Ten Fox Dance; Dianne Garbutt - Dutch Waltz; Canasta Tango; Jennifer Gentle - First Figure, Fiesta Dance, Willow Dance; Julie Hall - Swing Dance; Sara Lee Henderson - Preliminary Free Skate, Swing Dance; Joanna Obee - Preliminary Figure, Preliminary Free Skate, Canasta Tango, Swing Dance; Tammy Jo Pritchard - Ten Fox Dance; Jennifer Tomlinson - Dutch Waltz; Tanya Willis - Swing Dance, Ten Fox Dance, Fiesta Tango; Christina Irwin and Joanne Kerr also entered.

A total of fifty-two tests were tried by Bancroft, Bob-

(more on page 2)

The skaters who participated in the test at Bancroft are: front, left to right, Tammy Pritchard, Tanya Willis, Diane Garbutt, Janna Obee, Sara Henderson, Abby Burk, and Lisa Carr. Back row: left to right, pro Jane Symons, Lisa Box, Jennifer Tomlinson, Misti Campbell, Christa Irwin, Warna Blakey, Jenni Gentle, Julie Hall and Andrea Burk, pro.

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